

Albert W. Aiken's New Serial, "A Strange Girl," a New England Love Story, Commenced this Week.

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Framed in the snow was a human face--the face of a young girl.

### A STRANGE GIRL: A New England Love Story.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,

Author of the "Wolf Demon," "Overland Kit," "Red Mazeppa," "Witches of New York," etc.

#### CHAPTER I.

"LET ME DIE"

A BITTERLY cold evening in the month of December, the year 1870.

A driving snow-storm accompanied by a north-east gale had set in early in the morning, and at the time of which we write--seven in the evening--full eight inches of snow covered in the streets and house-tops of the city of Boston.

The night was dark as pitch; the lighted gas flaring from the street lamps, seemed only to make the darkness visible."

Few pedestrians were in the streets. Already the shops had begun to put up their shutters, and the good folks, snugly housed, and circling round their fires, began to speculate about the prospects for a hard winter.

Through the drifted snow, piled here and there in great heaps in Causeway street, came a short, stoutly-built woman, all muffled up, and carrying a large basket on her arm. A little yellow dog, with sharp ears and a stumpy tail, carried straight up over his back, followed the woman.

Stumbling through the snow-drifts and relentlessly facing the biting blast, that howled and raged around her as if to pluck the cloak from her shoulders, the woman came slowly along.

The lights streaming from the Eastern depot met her eyes.

"Bress de Lor!" she muttered, in accents that plainly betrayed her to be of the

dusky race of Ham; "dere's dat depot fo' sure. By golly! dis yere ole woman's t'ankful!"

"Bow-wow!" said the dog, darting suddenly from the track in the snow left by the old woman's footsteps, and approaching a snow-drift piled in a corner against the side of a house.

"W'at's de matter wid you?" growled the old woman, angrily, pausing to look after the dog.

"Bow-yow-yow!" cried the dog, sharply, and each particular hair on his body seemed to stand on end.

"You good-for-nuffin' Pete, w'at's de matter wid ye? I speck's you want fur to make me catch my deff o' cold in dis yere wind."

The dog barked again and longer than before; then he began to root with his nose in the snow-bank; he called upon his paws to assist his nose, and began to scratch and dig with all his might.

"Dat ki-yould'r mad for sure!" muttered the negress, approaching cautiously, plowing her way through the deep snow.

As the old woman approached, the dog paused suddenly, having made quite a hole in the light snow, lifted his snout and gave vent to a long and plaintive howl.

"Bress de Lord!" cried the negress, in affright, "dat dog howls as if dere was somebody dead."

The dog jumped to one side as his mistress approached, and began sniffing with his nose in the hole which he had made.

The old woman acted with caution; the night was dark, yet she could plainly distinguish the dark cavity in the snow.

The action of the dog, unaccountable to her, had awakened a fear that she was about to hold something dreadful, and she was not disappointed.

Framed in the snow was a human face--the face of a young girl. The long hair, black as night, flowing loosely down, fringed in the pale face from whence the ruddy blood had fled. That face was so beautiful with its clear, transparent skin, white as the polished marble, its regular outlines and perfect proportions, that the old woman, in her simple way, thought at first she looked upon an angel who had strayed from heaven to earth, riding upon the bosom of the snow-cloud, rather than on a mortal like herself.

The negress stood like one transfixed; but the dog, being an animal, and therefore not given to human weakness, gave another howl, and then commenced to lick the face of the beautiful girl who lay in her bridal dress of snow, waiting for the coming groom, grim Death.

Tenderly the rough tongue of the dog lapped away the snow-flakes from the girl's face.

Coming to her senses at last, the negress bent over the senseless girl, and seizing her in her strong arms pulled her out of the snow-drift.

"She's dead for sure," the old woman muttered, as she held the light, motionless

form of the girl in her arms, but when she pressed her great black cheek against the alabaster one of the girl, she felt the warmth of the blood still coursing feebly in the veins.

"I speck's a little whisky would fetch her, kase dat's w'at it's good fur." Then she looked around her carefully. The inspection was hardly needed, for the driving snow and the howling blast alone surrounded them.

"I reckon dere ain't any State comfort-bies 'round," she muttered, "kase I don't want fur to have de whisky took away from me."

It was evident that the old lady referred to the State constables and the license law.

She drew a good-sized flask from her pocket, and removing the cork, forced some of the liquor down the throat of the senseless girl.

The yellow dog sat on his haunches, and with an air of intelligence, which plainly signified his approbation, surveyed the proceedings.

"Dere, honey, dat will fetch you!" the negress said, caressingly smoothing back the coal-black hair which, dank as wet seaweeds, fringed the lovely face.

The liquor was of the worst kind, almost powerful enough in its strength and badness to raise the dead. Like a stream of liquid fire it coursed down the young girl's throat; a convulsive shudder shook her slender form, and a deep sigh came from her parted lips.

The snow still poured down pitilessly, and the cruel north-easter still roared and stormed, yet the old woman heeded not the driving snow nor the piercing wind; a human life trembled in the balance within her arms. What was the strife of the elements to the human struggle for existence?

The negress poured some of the whisky into her hand and bathed the girl's face with it. As the sufferer inhaled the powerful odor of the spirits, again she shuddered. The limbs stiffened for a moment, became rigid, then relaxed, and with a low, mournful sigh, more like the echo of a sigh than a sigh itself, the great eyes opened--the great staring black eyes almost superhuman in their wondrous beauty--so large, so bright, and within them shone a lustrous light, like unto the shimmer of the sun shining upon the rolling waves of the great green ocean.

For a moment the girl stared blankly into the great black face that was peering down so closely into her own, then, amazement appeared within the great dark eyes.

"Ye ain't dead, honey, bress de good Lord for dat!" exclaimed the old woman, piously, the true spirit of thankfulness beaming in every line of her good, kindly face.

The girl turned her head slightly as if to gaze about her; the dog noticed the motion. Instantly he stood up on his hind legs and indulged in a series of short, lively barks. He understood that with nose and claws he had not dug in the snow-bank in vain.

"Don't be afraid, honey; dat's only Pete; he's a good dog; he smelt you out in the snow, jest like a little yaller angel," said his owner, with enthusiasm.

"Oh!" moaned the girl, feebly, her head sinking back on the arm of the negress.

"Does ye feel weak, honey?" asked the old woman, benevolence beaming in every wrinkle on her sable face. "Jes' take 'nother suck at dat whisky."

"Who are you?" muttered the girl, faintly.

"Why, Lor' bress yer, I'se only Aunty Dinah," answered the sable-hued Samarian. "I doesn't live yere. I lives down at Biddeford whar de big mills are, heap o' miles from dis yere place. I was jes' gwine to de depot when dat yaller dog o' mine--dat Pete, smelt you out in de snow-bank."

"Why didn't you leave me alone?" the girl asked, slowly, and with broken accents. "W'at's dat, honey?" cried the old "Aunty" in astonishment. "By golly! dis yere ole nig nebberr sleep a wink dis snow-bank. Dat ain't cording to de Scripturz."

"Go away!" muttered the undeniably unhappy sufferer, striving feebly to release herself from the grasp of the old woman.

"W'at, me! Lordy, w'at's dis ole nigger done dat you send her away?" cried the negress, in astonishment.

"I want to die!" the girl murmured.

"Oh, chile, I done guess you nebberr reads de Good Book!" said Dinah, solemnly. "Dar ain't any use for to talk like dat. De Lord isn't going fur to let you die, kase he sent Pete and me fur to pull you out o' de snow-bank."

At the mention of his name the dog approached, and thrust his cold nose against the cheek of the girl; then he gave a quick, short bark, a very joyful bark, which plainly told that he considered he had done a wonderful thing in rescuing the girl from the snow-drift.

"Dere, does you hear dat? It's ole Pete tellin' yer how glad he is fur to see you speak."

"I don't want to speak--I don't want to live," and the girl broke into a flood tears--bitter, burning, scalding tears.

"You mustn't talk like dat, honey; dat's wicked, dat is."

"I am not fit to live," was gasped through tears.

"Lordy! you ain't done stole any thing?"

"No!"

"Ye ain't killed anybody?"

"No, no!"

Then the old negress, perplexed, looked down at the hand of the girl; the hand so

white and fair, it shamed the driven snow fresh from heaven's garners.

"She ain't married, kase dere ain't any ring on her finger," the old negress muttered to herself. "Maybe, honey, dat de young man dat you loved has fooled yer?"

"No, no, I have never loved any one," she murmured, the tears still streaming down her cheeks.

"Forde de Lor'! I'd like fur to know w'at dis yere poor chile has done!"

"Won't you go away and leave me alone?" the sufferer asked, plaintively.

"Leave you yere in dis snow-bank, honey?" exclaimed Dinah, in astonishment.

"Why, dis old nig nebberr hold her head up arter dat. By golly! I ain't gwine fur to let yer die dis dressed night."

"I must die!"

"If you don't hush up now, bress de Lor', I set Pete on yer!" said the negress, threateningly.

"I don't care," muttered the girl, closing her eyes again.

"Dat dog, Pete, jes' eat yer right up now, sure. So, honey, git up and come wid yer aunty."

"No; I laid down here in this corner, so that I could die in peace under the snow. Go away, and let the snow cover me up and hide me from all the world."

A sudden idea came to the kindly soul.

"I speak you ain't got any money."

"Not a cent in the world!"

"Ain't done got any friends, honey?"

"No, no friends."

"Dat's de reason you want fur to die?"

"Yes, one reason--but I am not fit to live!" exclaimed the girl, returning again to the old subject.

"Bress de Lor'!" cried the negress, in astonishment; "w'at has ye done?"

"Nothing--nothing!"

"Well, if ye ain't done nuffin', you isn't gwine to die. If you hain't got any money, jes' you come right along wid yer ole aunty. I lives way down in Biddeford, Maine. I'se jes' gwine fur to take-de keers fur to go home. You kin come along wid me, an' when I gets you down dar, den you won't want to die."

A thoughtful expression came over the girl's features; it was plain that she was thinking over the offer.

"Biddeford?" she said, slowly.

"Yes, chile, it's a heap of miles from dis yere. Dere's what de mills is."

"Mills?"

"Yes, honey; whar dey make de cloth."

"If I go with you, perhaps I could get work there?" the girl said, thoughtfully.

"Of course you kin!" cried the old woman, briskly. "I washes for de gemmors of de biggist mill dere. I knows dem all."

"No, one will know me at Biddeford," the girl murmured, evidently communing with herself, and unconscious that she was speaking aloud.

"Dat so, honey; will you be a good chile and come wid yer ole aunty?" the negress asked, assisting her charge to rise to her feet.

Standing, the girl was of the medium height, and even the loose waterproof cloak which she wore could not disguise the matchless beauty of her perfect form.

She was very weak and could not stand without assistance.

"But I have no money," she exclaimed.

"I kin pay yer fare, honey; dat's only lendin' to de Lord if you nebberr pays me; but, bress you, honey, you'll make more money at dat mill in a week dan yer ole aunty in a month."

"I will go with you; what is your name?"

"Dinah Salisbury; Aunty Dinah de folks calls me."

"My name is Lydia--Lydia Grame."

"Dat's a putty name."

The old woman adjusted the hood upon the girl's head and smoothed back the dark locks. Then she supported her to the depot. The 8 r. m. Express bore the three--the dog, Pete, being the third one of the party--eastward to the State of Maine.

#### CHAPTER II.

THE MINSTREL BAND.

The town of Biddeford, Maine, in the pleasant month of August.

In a large front room, in the Biddeford House, which fronted on the little square in the center of the village, were four men.

One sat by the window--a little fellow, with short cut hair and a huge mustache of almost supernatural blackness. It was just in the dusk of the evening, but still with light enough for him to read a glaring "poster" printed in red and black, which was affixed to a board, leaning against the wall of the post-office building opposite, and which announced the coming of the "Original Alligator Minstrels."

The little fellow was the "celebrated Johnny Snodgers, the Silver Cloggit;" vide the poster aforesaid.

Two more of the "Alligators" sat by a table in the center of the room--one, a short, thick-set fellow, with a round, German face; the other, a tall, thin, Yankee-looking personage, with a lantern-jawed countenance. The first of the two was known, professionally, as "Party" Kline; the other, Professor Handel Hill, the "world renowned violinist," vide "poster," as before.

The fourth one stood leaning carelessly against the mantel-piece--young, dashy, handsome fellow of twenty-five, with the face and form of an Apollo. Golden hair curled in little silken clusters all over his shapely head; his features were regular and clearly cut; his eyes were large and full, a bright, deep blue. A golden mustache over-



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it as though it had been a ghost, then made some excited inquiries in regard to it. What Shirely had said about him, and what you had said about the ring, led me to accuse him of being Pirate Paul; then, turning, I fled from his presence. But, oh, Martha! my poor heart is breaking. I can not give Ralph up, though he be Death-Noth himself!"

"No, you shall not give him up, Sylveen," exclaimed Martha. "There is some terrible mistake in this ring matter. Although I know not what occupation Ralph St. Leger follows, I know beyond a doubt, he is not Pirate Paul nor one of his gang."

"But he acted as you said a robber would, when he saw the ring."

"That may all be, Sylveen; but, it's a mistake I had not calculated upon. Ralph may have known something of that ring long before it came into possession of him who gave it to me. But, rest assured, Ralph is not a robber."

"Oh, Heaven! then I have committed an unpardonable error I fear." I may never see Ralph again."

"I will do all I can to bring about a meeting and reconciliation," said Martha; "but, Sylveen, has Scott Shirely pressed his suit for your hand lately?"

"He has asked me to be his wife repeatedly. But I do not love him. I love Ralph alone. Still uncle Hatch is anxious that I should marry him—insists upon it, and says I will have to choose between him and poverty. I do not know what to do, Martha."

"Tell Scott Shirely to look at that ring the next time you see him. Ask him if he remembers the maiden he gave it to, in Quebec, scarcely a year and a half ago. Ask him whether the waters of the St. Lawrence ever give up their dead, and whether or not he has a wife already!"

Sylveen was startled by these remarks. They puzzled her.

"You appear to know Scott Shirely, Martha?"

"Know him? Alas, to my sorrow! I, Sylveen, am his lawfully wedded wife, whom he deceived, betrayed and tried to murder."

"Martha, is this really the fact?"

"It is, Sylveen. He gave me that ring, so you see why I gave it to you, for when he thought he had drowned me, he knew I had the ring on my finger; and by his seeing it had come to light again, I thought it might frighten the villain."

"Then he is a pirate?"

"Yes; he is Pirate Paul!"

A little cry burst from Sylveen's lips.

"Yes, he is Pirate Paul," continued Martha. "And I am here to dog his footsteps and bring him to justice. But the hour has not yet come for me to strike."

"But, how did you find out that he is Pirate Paul?"

"Through a dear friend—El Pardon."

"The victim of Death-Noth?"

"No, the victim of the robbers themselves. They mistreated him of being a spy, and having murdered him to avert suspicion, marked him and the tree under which he was found, with the totem of Death-Noth."

"Then you know where the robbers' hide den is?"

"I do. I have been in it, and ere many days pass, it shall be made public. Shirely does not know that I live. He would kill me if he did. My love for him has turned to hatred, and I am here for revenge. But, Sylveen, here is a slip of paper and a pencil. Write a note and leave it here for Ralph. Ask his forgiveness, and for another interview."

"He might never come for it, Martha."

"He was here yesterday and the day before. He may come yet to-day. He can not give up his love for you, dear Sylveen."

"How do you know he was here, Martha?"

I have a spy on Shirely's track. He saw Ralph here. He saw him go this time and look into that hollow tree, as if half-expecting to find something there."

"It is our old post-office," cried Sylveen, a light of hope beaming in her eyes. "I will write him a note and leave it here. Oh, Ralph! Ralph! I hope you will forgive me!"

She took the paper and pencil and wrote a note, which, with a prayer of hope, she deposited in the hollow tree.

Then the two wended their way back to the village.

In less than half an hour later, that note was read, but not by Ralph St. Leger.

**CHAPTER XXIV.**  
THE STRUGGLE IN THE CREEK.

The two foes grappled in a deadly embrace—twisting themselves together like twining serpents, in pliant and subtle folds. So swift were their movements and evolutions that their bodies seemed incorporated into one. For a while no one could have told how the battle went, for they fought at times beneath the water, and at other times they were enshrouded in a cloud of foam and spray.

For several minutes the conflict waxed hot. It was evident, too, that the strength of both was failing, for this conflict was less desperate than it first had been. Still, neither of them had drawn a weapon, and the struggle would have to be decided by main strength.

Suddenly, however, several figures emerged from the shadows of the woods, and gazed down on the struggling foes. They were savages, and a gleam of surprise and vengeance flashed from their eyes when they discovered the cause of the confusion in the water—saw their comrade in combat with the old hunter—saw that the tide of victory was slowly but surely turning in favor of the white man.

Quickly one of their number sprang into the creek and began wading to his friend's assistance, but, at the same instant, the rush of feet was heard on the opposite bank—a figure shot through the air, and landing on the savage, bore him down into the water. It was the friendly Omaha, while upon the bank, facing the savages on the opposite side, stood the Avengers, with their rifles leveled full at the breasts of the red foe.

A bloody conflict was only averted by a yell of triumph bursting from Omaha's lips, closely followed by another yell from the lips of Old Shadow.

The savages recoiled, and not wishing to engage in a struggle, the Avengers did not follow them up, nor fire a single shot.

Omaha and Old Shadow at once made their appearance from the creek. A scalp was at Omaha's girdle and a glow of triumph in his dark eyes. Old Shadow bore no trophy of his conflict, but he was gasping with exhaustion.

Rather a tight place you were in, Sylveen," said one of our young friends.

"Whoop, by crash!" he exclaimed. "ye bet it war now, but the cunnin' varlet has passed in his dockyments. That war twic'e he disturbed my prospect for grub, the low-lid hound of Satan. But, I tell ye, lads, wind is skarse' bout this ole karkass, and hunger is purty plenty. But I've got fine turkey out thar, and feel much like I could take hold o' it, feathers and all."

Omaha waded across the creek and procured the turkey, and then they all returned to where the Avengers had lighted a fire.

It required but a few minutes to dress the game in hunters' style, then it was roasted to a crisp brown, and a goodly portion of it eaten with a sharp appetite and keen relish.

After the meal was completed and the remains of the turkey stowed away for future use, Old Shadow expressed his readiness to fight his way through to the Indian village.

The little band soon resumed its journey, and as the day advanced, the keen eye of Omaha detected a fresh trail in the yielding soil. There were the hoof-prints of two or three horses and a number of moccasin-tracks. Both Omaha and Old Shadow agreed upon their being made by a party of white men; and they all had reason to believe it was a party of robbers, pushing for the Indian village.

They were enraptured, and that they might have a fairer view of the place and its inhabitants—that they might bring those sweet strains of music nearer, they parted the foliage and peered through upon the twain of lovers, Vida St. Leger and Fred Travis.

Leaving them to gaze enchanted upon the wildwood beauty and her lover, let us return to the robbers' camp, where Sylveen Gray and Martha Gregory are prisoners.

As soon as the captives had finished their meager supper, their hands were rebound. They were then placed in a small bower constructed for them of boughs and blankets.

Here the two women sat and talked over their misfortune and probable fate. Sylveen was sad at heart and low-spirited, while Martha was hopeful of being rescued, and defiant to her captors.

Suddenly, however, their conversation was disturbed by a stranger voice that seemed to be approaching the camp, and singing, in a loud, jolly tone, the words:

"The possum he grinded at the ole hedgehog,  
The ole hedgehog, the ole hedgehog,  
Way down by the Squantum—"

"Halt, there!" suddenly rang out the voice of one of the robbers, and the temporary demand was accompanied with the click of a gun-lock.

Old Shadow, for he the intruder was, ceased singing, and confronted the white Indian with apparent surprise.

"By the royal voice of the woods," he exclaimed, "if you ain't a sassy cuss, now! Who are ye, anyhow?"

"Me Ingan," replied the outlaw, attempting to counteract bad English.

"Now, ole buck, I'd hate to tell ye that yer tellin' a smug little lie, but, nevertheless, it's a positive fact, you are a giawine, downright, flat-footed, bare-faced—"

"Be careful, idiot!" exclaimed the indignant prairie prate; "you might utter yer death-warrant!"

"And you be keefer, ole mug-head, or I'll go through ye like an ounce chunk of lead. I'm Ole Shader, I'd have ye know, ye villainous bull-pup, and if I on't slit across a man's vision, he's got his pass fur the sulpher diggin's."

"You're an old, ole buck-mouthed fool," retorted the robber, growing bolder as his friends gathered around him.

"You measure other's grain in yer own bushel, I see," replied the old hunter; "but, Mister, what's in that bower?"

"None of your business," returned the indignant robber.

"Cool, very cool; ye must have an iceberg awixt yer cap and brain. But I can tell ya what's in that bower: *g's weenies*."

"Well, what's that to you?"

"Why, ye durnd sap-head scamp, ye stole 'em!"

"You tell a—"

The pirate did not finish the sentence, for the fist of Old Shadow was planted directly between his eyes, causing his heels to describe a semicircle through the air.

The outlaw was a large, burly fellow, and no doubt possessed of twice the old hunter's strength, but, with all the grit of an old hound, the latter grappled with his adversary before he could regain his feet.

The other robbers gathered around the combatants to witness the certain annihilation of the impudent old hunter, but they soon had a conflict of their own to prosecute. For the first blow from Old Shadow was the signal for the Avengers to make their appearance.

A camp fire is burning at one side, and one of the pale Indians is busy around it, broiling venison for their supper. It requires but a few minutes to prepare the meal, and when it is announced as ready, the hands of the captives are freed from their bonds. Then tender slices of the venison are brought to them, not on a silvery tray, but on large green leaves. One of the captives accepts the proffered viand—the other refuses it.

"You had better take it, dear Sylveen," whispered Martha Gregory to her young friend; "it will give you strength which you may yet need, dearest!"

Pretty, sad-hearted Sylveen, Gray took the venison and ate it, and after it proved quite delectable to her taste. It added strength to her body, and in so doing it strengthened her hope of being rescued from Pirate Paul and his minions, who had effected their capture that morning while taking their usual walk in the woods near Stony Cliff.

The disguised men ate their supper in silence, then resumed their lounging attitudes; some engaged in smoking, others in silent thought.

Suddenly the whole band starts. Something like the sound of music reaches their ears, drifting through the forest aisles in notes faint as those of an Eolian harp—so faint as to be almost inaudible.

"What the deuce is it, anyhow?" asked Pirate Paul.

"Music, captain, sure as you're a sinner," replied one of his men, listening eagerly.

"Whew!" ejaculated another, "this must be paradise itself. The angels are tuning their harps."

The next instant every man is upon his feet. Those enchanting strains make all strangely anxious to know from whence such melody comes.

"We can't all leave at a time, boys," said Pirate Paul, glancing in a significant manner at the captives; "part go at a time and we'll last longer."

Seven or eight of the pirates resumed their positions of ease on the ground, while the others stole away in the direction from which the music seemed to come.

As they move on and on, the sound gradually grows plainer, clearer and sweeter. They move with the silence of phantoms, almost entranced by the ravishing

sounds that come to their ears. Surely it is an enchanted spot. They falter. Their wicked hearts grow cowardly. Something so sweet and heavenly in that music makes them feel as though they were approaching a hallowed spot with unclean spirits. Finally they pause. But the music swells out, nearer and sweeter than before. They can not resist its seductive inspiration. It fascinates them. It draws them on and, until they stand upon the banks of a little stream, enchanted by what they see.

A little opening or glade is before them. In the center of it stands a little, vine-embowered cabin. A narrow path leads from the door through an archway of flowers and creeping vines. They run along that path, and just before them, where it touches the creek, they see two persons seated—a girl and a young man. The former appears to them like an angel in a dream. In her lap she holds a Spanish guitar, over whose strings her little white fingers are fluttering like snowflakes, calling forth those sweet, melodious sounds.

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"You measure other's grain in yer own bushel, I see," replied the old hunter; "but, Mister, what's in that bower?"

"None sense Edna! you know well enough your father gave me his consent to win you if I could. *That* will not do for an excuse, you perceive?"

"Besides," she went on, charmingly unconscious of the anxiety in her lover's voice, "there is Mr. Rexleigh, you know—"

"Confound Mr. Rexleigh! What has he to do with you and I, Edna? Oh, Edna, pet, I don't mean to be cross to you, but when I hear you mention him as an obstacle to our happiness I can't help wishing him at the bottom of the Hudson."

"Oh, Harry Delford!" and the little explanation of horrified surprise was denied by the mischief in her eyes.

"Harry Delford! you know well enough why I referred to Mr. Rexleigh."

Edna sat fanning herself very composedly; a picture of rare beauty and self-independence, and Harry, as he watched the play of her pretty features, wondered, away down in his heart, if all that roguish piety of Edna Vernet's manner hid a strong love for him—or Elmer Rexleigh. Now, there was occasioned by Edna's last remark, a sudden loss of all his faith in himself, and success.

"Suppose Mr. Rexleigh was an obstacle, as he had himself asserted, to his and Edna's happiness? or, in other words, what if his and Edna Vernet's happiness were not identical?"

And then his lips trembled ever so slightly when he bravely asked Edna *why* Mr. Rexleigh had any thing to do with her promising to be his wife.

"Why?" and Edna for a moment lifted her sparkling eyes to his face; "because he has asked me to marry him. And he has not had his answer yet."

Harry shrunk away in a sudden horror. Surely if Edna loved him she would not stab him so; surely she must love Mr. Rexleigh, after—

Edna's clear, sweet voice

# SATURDAY JOURNAL

**Saturday Journal**

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## Our Arm-Chair.

THE large number of manuscripts coming to us underpaid in postage, make it very apparent that many authors are indifferent as to the fate of their contributions. The P. O. officials are now not only exacting *full letter rates on all "press manuscripts,"* but, in addition, further the expense by *doubling* the amount of the underpaid postage. That this is illegal we think is unquestionable since it makes the whole amount of postage, when paid, exceed the only legal rate of three cents for each half ounce. As a publisher has no power to prohibit the assessment, nor to correct the wrong done, all that authors can do is to be very careful fully prepay every package submitted to the mails. Better, in fact, overpay a little to be doubly sure. We now advise the use of the express where it is convenient. The cost, in some instances, is greater, but you have the satisfaction of knowing that the manuscript will reach the publisher expeditiously, safely and without "extra charges."

**Chat.**—The good papers are no more responsible for the bad than Henry Ward Beecher is responsible for Reddy the Blacksmith; and yet, we frequently hear persons speak of all popular papers with a sneer. When asked for an explanation they unfailingly name some inferior and perhaps discreditable paper as a proof of their sweeping verdict. Of course, our first mental question is—how came you to read the paper which all decent persons try to avoid, but it won't do to ask so pertinent a question, and we usually are content to remark that the paper named is as much like the good popular papers as a hyena is like a horse. The popular papers of greatest circulation are unexceptionable, and are far safer to introduce to the fireside and home than any of the dailies. The dailies are unable to discriminate, to a great degree; they must publish what is "news," and therefore detail many a story which had better have remained unpublished; whereas the weekly can and does discriminate closely, and it is, therefore, much the safer journal for the young to read. The very worst foes to our popular weekly journals are these constantly sinning dailies—which fact is very suggestive.

If this world is not wise and good it will not be for want of advice. The amount of wisdom and wise sayings afloat would be overpowering, only that men and women and children are human. As "to err is human," it follows that, despite the good there is in these wise sayings, each one "errs" just enough to see the wrong side, and to be able to tell his children after him the things they are not to do. Tom Hood, Sr., told Tom Hood, Jr., to avoid the race-course and gaming-table, as he had seen the evil there was in them. "Yes, father," was the answer, "and I too would like to see the evil there is in them"—which convinced Tom, Sr., that boys would be boys, and proves the old adage that you can't place old heads on young shoulders. And it does something more: it has a moral, which is—"Don't be unreasonably censorious of the boys who are just as their fathers were before them." Taken as a whole each generation repeats itself. Human nature is about the same, everywhere, and he is a wise man who can understand this. When you meet such a wiscare you will find a person whose charity overlooks a multitude of sins.

"The fast styles," which are now fully developed, are about as absurd as bad taste can make them. The effort appears to be to see how much money can be laid out on a dress or hat in the way of extraneous ornament. The body goods, no matter how expensive, serve only as a base or groundwork on which to plaster gimpes, fringes, laces, velvets, etc., until the dress material is lost in a maze of tinsel and gewgaws as meretricious and absurd as the circus ring mountebank's bells. Not only is this ornamentation a most barbarous exhibition of taste but it is fearfully expensive. The common charge for merely making a dress is equal to the cost of a nice garment, while the frippery itself costs usually as much as the dress fabric. Twenty dollars is "cheap as dirt" for making an a-la-mode dress; the more usual cost is thirty to forty dollars for ordinary evening dresses, and, considering the amount of labor required, this sum is not an overcharge. There will be—there must be a revision. The good sense of ladies and their keen appreciation of the fitness of things will lead them to simpler styles and more tasteful garments. Then the "artists" and "moderates" and merchants growing rich on woman's folly will rejoice, but those who have to foot the bills will rejoice.

### BEWARE OF THAT WOMAN.

I WOULD caution you against that woman who will enter your house as a friend, and, after worming all your troubles and grievances out of you, will then go among your neighbors, saying you are fretful and complaining. Maybe she'll tell affairs that you have confided to her in secrecy, and one doesn't want to have private matters blazoned forth to the world.

Keep clear of that woman who will allow her daughters to associate with those young men of whose characters she knows nothing—who will not ask them where they have been, after taking a walk—and who will not ask to see the letters their daughters receive. A woman can not be too particular in these matters. Where there is concealment and mystery, something must be wrong, and if mothers would have their children turn out virtuous men and women, it is their duty to guard them in their youth. She who will not do that is not one whose acquaintance is worth desiring, and she needn't call at my house

any day this week, for I shall certainly be "not at home" to her.

Shun that woman's company who receives the visits of married men in the absence of her husband. She may tell you there is no harm in it; what of that? It looks badly enough, and appearances go a great way in this world.

Beware of that woman who passes more time in gadding about from one house to another than she does in attending to her own home. She loves to pick up any scandal on the wing, and use it against you some day, when you have offended her and she feels spiteful toward you. Such a being is no friend to you, and a worse enemy you could not find. Her tongue will wag against you, and she won't stick to the truth. She's a viper, and so contemptible a one that the one in the Garden of Eden was an angel compared to her.

Be distant with her who will praise you to the seventh heaven when she feels good-humoredly toward you, but who'll call you all manner of names when you do not do every thing she desires you to do. Such an individual is beneath one's notice, and is not worth the paper this is written upon.

Beware of that woman who will prevaricate—my dictionary says lie—to get herself out of a scrape. She's one who will speak all evil against your friend, and then will look demurely up in your face, and remark, "I am sure I never said anything against him." What a mean, low and despotic spirit is that! It seems to me my Bible says, "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." But this woman needs not those words, though she knows them just as well as you and I do. Ough! I'd double-lock my door against such a character, and she might rap her knuckles sore before I'd open it to her.

Keep on the other side of that woman who is continually bragging about the wealth and social standing of her relatives, for she is a most incorrigible bore. I don't think rich relations are much to boast about, unless they have cultivated minds as well. But this woman has a different idea on that subject, and esteems the man who is possessed of a few greenbacks, even if his head be shallow, above him who has a fair share of brains, but whose purse is not so well lined. I've even heard her call a person who minded his own business, and in no way interfered with hers, "a fool;" and why? Simply because he had an education, and knew the laws of etiquette and refinement, which she did not. I tell you to beware of that woman!

Do not keep open house to that woman who thinks it an honorable thing to vilify her neighbors, and to keep a village in a state of turmoil with her wagging tongue. She couldn't do more harm were she to set the place on fire, and the only good that would come of it would be her own conflagration.

Beware of that woman who delights in matchmaking. It's a trade I loathe, abhor and despise, and the trader is worse, by her presence, to me, than a venomous reptile, and I had rather come across the latter any day, for the poison of the former is more deadly.

Beware of that woman who is so engrossed in self that she does not desire others to have any pleasure—thinks every attention ought to be shown to her—imagines it to be a cruel thing if she can not have as much cash as you do—holds up her hands in horror if she has to pay to an entertainment got up by the young people, but would not hesitate to sneak in to a rehearsal of the same, if she could get it free!

There, I feel better for what I've said! People needn't imagine I'm going to smooth these matters over. If you come across any of these women I have named, beware of them!

EVE LAWLESS.

### Foolscap Papers.

#### Battle of Marathon.

ALL night the two armies lay close to each other in two straight lines, with nothing but an old rail fence between; one of the lines was horizontal, and the other was parallel. All night the brave men on either side would reach through and tickle their enemies with a straw, or steal their can-teens. The cavalry slept stretched out on the backs of their horses; they were circumspect; every now and then a cavalry man would get up in his sleep and go to stirring around, and would fall out of bed, generally running his head into the ground like a spike.

They had lain that close together all the day before, as the Generals couldn't make up their minds to fight, but, when morning broke, Smith, the Athenian General, if forgotten his historical name, thought that if he could succeed in licking Brown, the Persian General, this other name was Xerxes, so spelled because he made his mark (x) so often he would love him better, and ordered the battle to begin without further ceremony. He sent his First Division forward, but they failed to divide the Persian lines, although they poured a very heavy Greek fire into them, which they had no way of getting off, and returned with thanks and great carnage.

The First Division returned with a good deal of Subtraction and pretty fast in Addition, for they had received a check which wasn't payable at any bank: they fell back on their muscles, and some of them broke their necks.

General Smith here discharged a volley of oaths at the enemy, which sent them reeling back to their lines. He surveyed the field with his hour-glass—he took a glass every half-hour, by the way—and sent a battalion forward with bats beating on tin pans to create a panic in the Persian ranks, but they were routed back again by the old route, having been kicked by Persians, with great slaughter.

Xerxes Brown now opened upon the Grecian ranks his batteries of Parrott guns, hurling destructive parrots into the Greeks with great ferocity, and badly shattered their Corinthian columns.

The Greeks, having no use for their fire, returned it with thanks by opening their catapults on them at once, hurling a shower of terrific cats, that darkened the air and appalled the stoutest hearts with their murderous hissing. The left wing of the Persians was broken by this fire and couldn't fly. A twelve-pound bat struck Xerxes Brown on the nose, completely carrying that article away. He didn't like this *claw* in the war.

The battle now began to rage in earnest on all sides. The Greek fusiliers poured fusil oil into the Persians, and the artists, who had charge of their artillery, poured such a repulsive fire into the Persian lines

that they got behind trees and scorned it; they then fired round shot, which would run around trees and breastworks and hunt up the enemy.

The bombs from the Persian bombazine were very destructive. A fifteen-inch bomb went down the Greek general, Smith's, back and lodged in his coat-tail pocket. A fifty-pound round shot entered his mouth, going down his throat and finally came out of his right ear.

Smith took a corps of extraordinary chargers, and saying, "Soldiers from yonder pyramids thirty centuries behind you," charged upon the Persians' right, and there wasn't any of it left. He cut them all up and salted them down, and filing left with saw files he attacked the enemy's center. It was hand to hand. Smith's battle-cry rang out above the sound of conflict: "If any man attempts to haul away the American flag, shoot him on the spot." His sword flashed everywhere; it had teeth on one edge. He would catch a Persian by the hair and saw his head off with two strokes. He had his sleeves rolled up and a butcher's apron on. He ordered his own men to remain idle and look at him doing the killing, and said if there was a Herald correspondent present, he would be obliged to him if he would come forward so he could see better. He was no quarter-master and refused to give any quarter or other small change.

About noon, in the heat of the battle, a bottle of S. T. X.—1860 struck him in the stomach and made him stagger and reel; he was caught in the arms of his men and borne off the field, yelling to the Persian General, Xerxes Brown, to stay till after dinner and he would come back and buckled the balance of them, and was laid down on his knapsack to take a nap, covered with glory, mud, and the label of the bottle.

While the Greeks were partaking of their usual hard-tack (abbreviation of Hardee's tactics), the Persians, reinforced by seven million men, poured down upon the Greeks to see what they had for dinner. The Greeks were quite surprised at this visit, as no cards had been sent beforehand. General Smith jumping up, hastily put on his helmet—a small old iron kettle—pulled the handle of it down under his chin, stuck on his trenchant corn-cutter, brightened the brass buttons on his breast, put on a clean paper collar, got his men in a fine very tight line, and shouting, "Charge, Chester, charge!" On Mr. Stanley, on! renewed the battle.

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The two Generals met in the thickest of the fray. With one murderous swoop, Smith completely severed Xerxes' plume from his straw hat. X brought his ponderous mace down upon S. S.'s head and broke the iron kettle. Smith discharged his boot with his foot in it at X, who was reaching down after his plume, but, miscalculating the range, his foot went up and he came down on his back with the honors of war—that he did in defense of his country.

Just then was shouted, "They fly! They fly!" and Xerxes turned and saw men in the pursuit of happiness, and started off himself, yelling, "A mule! My kingdom for a mule!" and, as there was no enemy there to fight, the battle ended.

Pensively, WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

### Woman's World.

Household Hints on Various Subjects.—How to Furnish a House with a Modest Sum of Money.

THERE is nothing outside of Love's young dream which renders young people so happy as going to housekeeping. If a young couple have been boarding for some time, that only enhances the pleasure. But, how often do we see in that flutter of delight as many foolish blunders committed as young lovers are guilty of.

At no time in life is more care required in the outlay of money than when commencing to keep house.

Forethought and economy are then required to put every dollar in something that will give lasting pleasure when you look at it, and enduring comfort for years, if not for life, and perhaps for your children's children.

Many young housekeepers fritter away small sums at a time on cheap and tawdry articles, which must be thrown away in a few years at best. Remember this maxim in making all your investments: "The best is the cheapest."

Furnish your rooms gradually with solid well-made pieces of furniture, substantial rather than ornamental articles; good in-grain carpets or velvet on your bedrooms, and medium-priced Brussels or velvet on your parlors, and you will not have to re-furnish for years, perhaps never.

On your corridors or halls, and library floors put wood carpeting or linoleum, not oil-cloth. For your parlor and sitting-room use Brussels at \$2 or \$2.25 a yard. Let the pattern be in medallions or running vines or arabesques, whichever may suit your fancy; but, be sure that the figures are not large. The bedroom carpets should be of light and cheerful colors, blue and drab, or green and wood colors; figures small, the cost not more than \$1 or \$1.50 per yard.

The parlor set need not cost more than \$200. Black walnut with colored rep upholstery to match the carpet would look best. Sets consisting of seven pieces, sofa, two arm-chairs and four small chairs are shown at the price named above. Any thing cheaper will not last, and if you are not able to furnish the whole house at once, get and return with thanks and great carnage.

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The dining-room clock will be almost necessary. It need not cost more than \$10. One for the parlor, when purchased, should be of bronze, and if illustrating some incident, historical, mythological, or poetical, by a pretty striking group, so much the better.

For ornaments nothing can be handsomer than bronzes or a few figures in marble. But these are not necessities, and may be purchased at intervals. Be sure that each figure or group tells a story or illustrates a striking fact, and points a poetic or moral allegory. If you have extra funds to expend for ornaments, choose a few fine engravings or chromos instead of that French-American abomination—a mirror. Pictures educate the eye, cultivate the taste, and afford themes for conversation. A mirror looks well, only when it reflects such objects in its depths, as well as brocatoe and rosewood, or the well-dressed form of the mistress of the mansion.

Let us descend to the kitchen. Blessed is that small home where there is no hired help, and where the young mistress, with the occasional aid of a day's work from a laundress or house-cleaner, can do her own work. With our modern conveniences for facilitating the labor of the household, this is in fact a far lighter task than it was twenty-five years ago, when it was a much more common practice than now. That woman is dull, indeed, who can not cook with Prof. Blot in her hand and a patent steam cooker in her kitchen. For those who have never seen this triumph of British genius (for it was invented by a Captain Waneng of the English navy) we will endeavor to describe it.

It is a large tin box, and has a closely-fitting cover. There are upper and lower compartments, which serve as receptacles for the meats and vegetables. Underneath is a narrow chamber, containing water. In using it, the vessel is set on the stove over the fire, and as soon as the water boils it is ready for use. Then you have only to place in the different compartments for every thing needed in preparing a meal, such as flour, sugar, butter, pepper, salt, and all those thousand and one things, it is well to have convenient to the hand, instead of having to run to the store-room, or open the cupboard, to get them.

As the viands can not come in contact with the water or steam, they are cooked in their own juices, and none of their nutritious qualities are lost. Of course it is impossible to burn or scorch the food.

That nuisance of small homes, the odor of cooked or cooking food, is completely obviated by this manner of cooking. No odor can be detected after the lid is put on the cooker, and when it is removed it will be found that each vegetable and meat has retained its distinctive taste, and has lost not one particle of its nutriment.

Of course every modern household should be provided with one of these inventions.

Another ingenious device is that of the pantry-table—a kitchen-table with a lid, which raises, and upon being set back against the wall is found to contain compartments and little drawers for every thing needed in preparing a meal, such as flour, sugar, butter, pepper, salt, and all those thousand and one things, it is well to have convenient to the hand, instead of having to run to the store-room, or open the cupboard, to get them.

Another invention is that of the Dime Novels Series except the last named. The rhymed *"Parrot Sweet"*, *"Purdie Sweet"*, was never written, but the sketches were written by Frank Leslie's Illustrated Paper. *"The Story of Our Wife,"* was published as a

# SATURDAY JOURNAL

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## A TEAR IN SORROW WEPT.

BY L. C. GREENWOOD.

A tear in sorrow wept, means more than words  
That from the tongue in gentle accents blend;  
More than the sigh that sweeps the heart's deep  
chamber.  
Which only cease to thrill when life doth end.  
And oft the only comforter it proves,  
A tear that's backward kept, pains more than  
doubts.  
Whose rust corrodes the soul with deep despair;  
And like a flower in its rarest bloom,blooms  
Pines 'neath the weight it feels too much to bear;  
Oh, there is grief when tears have ceased to flow,  
The tears that come when sorrows burn the woe.  
Blest are the tears that are in sorrow wept.  
They but discard our lives, when backward  
kept.

## Madame Durand's Protégés;

OR,

## THE FATEFUL LEGACY.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,  
AUTHOR OF "STRANGELY WED," "CECIL'S DE-CIDE," "ADRIA THE ADOPTED," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER XV.

#### A TERRIBLE ACCUSATION.

The night express from Philadelphia dropped two passengers at Fairview station, which was situated a full mile and a half from the village proper.

There was a mail-wagon morning and evening driven out to meet the appropriate trains, but at nine P. M. no conveyance was at hand in the vicinity of the little isolated station-house. This much the two passengers ascertained, and consulting together, determined to walk the distance up the rugged road to the village.

"Danced awkward to leave our luggage behind," said one, in a drawing, indolent tone. "One never finds accommodations in these country taverns, and I don't fancy being jumbled up indiscriminately with all sorts of people we're likely to meet. You'll be sure to send the trunks ahead in the morning."

"Sure," promised the station-agent. The gentlemen should find them at the Fairview House by ten at the latest. Were they intending to stay long at the village?

"That depends," answered the one who seemed to have constituted himself spokesman. "Any trout in the streams?"

"Plenty of 'em. Good accommodations, too, considering the difficulties of the situation. Young gentlemen from the city often come out here for a few weeks in the summer-time; but the place isn't stylish enough for the young ladies, bless their hearts! Not but we have some of our own in the section round about, though," added the voluble station-agent.

"We'll not trouble them, then," answered the passenger, with a laugh. "Truth to tell, we dropped down into these wilds to get out of the way of crinoline, for a time. Come, Drake, let's be moving, or we'll have to knock up the establishment, and I'm ravenous now. Suppose we carry our valises."

Taking the light leather traveling-bags, and leaving two trunks to be sent after them, the late passengers took the road to the village. The first was young, and clad in a style rather pronounced, such as might pertain to a city clerk determined to create a sensation during the holidays. The man called Drake was of middle age, quieter in dress and of a manner reserved if not taciturn. He had the look of a respectable bookkeeper or bank employee.

The landlord of the Fairview House chanced to be entertaining some late guests, and a supper was served the newly-arrived travelers with less delay than might have been apprehended. While they were still at table, North dropped in and stood conversing with the clerk behind the bar.

"Have something?" asked the latter.

"A glass of your home-brewed. I'm not in the habit of indulging in stimulants, you know."

"Not to celebrate your good fortune?" asked the landlord, coming up at that moment and slapping him on the back familiarly. "Come, come, North! It's seldom enough we see you here; stand treat for the occasion, I say."

By this time the two men had quit the supper-table and joined the group in the outer room. North turned toward the bartender.

"Take the orders of the party," said he. "Cigars for me, please."

Drake also chose cigars when his time came around. North only waited to pay the reckoning, and was passing down the steps of the hotel porch when he was accosted by the elder traveler.

"A light, if you please. Ah, thank you. Is this your way? No intrusion to keep you company for a little way, I hope; I always smoke in the open air."

"Oh, no intrusion," North assured him. "But I stop just beyond here."

"Been coming into a fortune?" queried the stranger.

"Only a legacy—not large—five hundred dollars," explained the clerk, briefly. He was not so gratified with the bequest as he might have been had not the amount come to him over the head of the woman he loved, and was chary of alluding to the matter.

Drake made no further remark, however. He puffed contemplatively at his cigar until his companion paused with his hand upon the gate before Mr. Thancroft's dwelling.

"We part company here, I suppose," said the clerk. "Good-night to you, sir!"

"Not quite," the other answered, with quiet assurance. "Show me in to Mr. Thancroft. It's not necessary to announce me."

North stared.

"Can't you wait until office hours?" he asked. "I don't like to disturb my employer."

"He'll not count it a disturbance," answered Drake. "Besides, he's expecting me. Which way, and I'll not trouble you."

North swung open the house door, and struck a light in the long, narrow hall.

"The second door to the left, straight ahead," he said, and held the candle aloft to throw its flickering gleam upon the way.

At the same moment, the door opened from within, and framed the lawyer in the glow from the large astral lamp which put to shame the wavering candle rays.

"You are punctual," said he, standing aside to let his late visitor pass; and then nodded his dismissal to North.

The door closed again, and the clerk took his way up a flight of narrow stairs in the rear of the hall to his single apartment above. He had grown singularly grave in the last moment or two. That long consul-

tation over the dead body of Madame Durand, had not been kept private as the participants in it could have wished, and the surmises freely bandied about assisted him to arrive at the true nature of the business which had brought a visitor at this unusual hour, in this apparently preconcerted manner.

"Heaven grant nothing may come of it," he muttered, to himself, uneasily. "I don't know why I should fear any thing even at the worst, but if there's been foul play there'll be foul work before it's unmasked. I can't help wishing that some one but me had brought that man here."

One who had not fathomed his thoughts might have fancied North grown suddenly nervous. The stay of the visitor below was limited; and in the days that succeeded, he and his companion strictly followed the programme that was expected of them—trouting and gunning with indifferent success; making some casual acquaintances about the village, smoking, drinking pale ale, and discussing neighborhood gossip with the landlord of the Fairview House, who was favorably inclined toward these well-ordered lodgers.

And at the manse there had been little change since the gloom attendant upon the late sorrowful occasion had settled over the household. The badges of mourning were worn by all its members; but further than that, and the void left by the absence of the familiar mistress—a void which to those who had long been accustomed to the grotesque little figure, the sharp sound of the ebony stick ringing at intervals through the paved corridors, the keen eyes that kept close surveillance over the whole domain, and the imperious will of the madame, could not readily be filled.

A maiden sister of Dr. Gaines had taken up her abode at the manse, in the capacity of companion to the two young ladies, and as a conciliation to Mrs. Grundy, who is ever on the look-out for any breach of social etiquette.

A week had passed since the reading of the will, and Lucian Ware had not since made his appearance at the manse. Fay recovered now from the first bitterness of her disappointment, though by no means reconciled to her meager apportionment, felt his absence with a growing sense of indignation and resentment. She was impatient for the sympathy which she considered was her just claim from him, and nervously pestled until she should receive assurance of his faith, which she had too much belief in her own witching fascinations to doubt—although she was not madame's heiress.

But, a week after the reading of the will, Ware came up from the office, ostensibly to carry some message to Valere; to take observations, and gain certain information regarding facts that were of vital import to him.

This week, during which he had held himself aloof from them all, had been one of bitter strife, wearing desires, maddening, passion-inspired impulses, held this far in check by that tense will which had never yielded to any mastering power until Mirabel Durand all unconsciously filled his insatiable—albeit cruelly selfish—capacity for idolatrous worship.

Now his spirit was panting within him for a glimpse of her; he would have sacrificed much of worldly interest to only touch her hand and hear words of passing kindness fall from her lips; he would have risked his chances for this world and the next, to have poured out the strong fervor of his love, and plead, as only his specious tongue could plead, for a meet return, with but the slightest hope of success.

But, he could quell the wild tumult which rose within him; he could come up through the grounds to the manse, treading where she might recently have walked, drinking in the fragrance of the flowers which, now that the madame was no more, she had made her especial care, occupy the room where she might recently have sat, and yet command the impulse which would have urged him to seek her presence and wreck his fondest hopes by a premature burst of passionate appeal.

He could be patient, crafty, calculating.

So he sent up no message to Mirabel Durand except as included in his respects to "the ladies," but scribbled a few words upon a card to be delivered to Miss St. Orme.

He went alone into the silent parlor to await her coming, and a moment later she glided in, with a soft radiance touching her face.

Ware stood before a window, passive and cold, looking worn and haggard.

"Ah, dilatory lover!" she said, reproachfully, crossing to his side.

He let her hand rest passively upon his palm, then bowed and relinquished it.

"Whatever else Miss St. Orme may number in the catalogue of her faults, dilatory are not one of them. You were prompt—very prompt, Miss St. Orme; and how were you profited, after all?"

Fay regarded him strangely, but with a soft smile gradually dimpling about her parted lips, beaming even in its burden of tender solicitude.

"My poor Lucian! My dear boy, how wretchedly you are looking. How that miserable business has told upon you—how you must have worried over it all. See how like a Spartan heroine I have borne the test, though I nearly died of disappointment just at first. We can afford to wait, Lucian."

He dropped his face over her with bitter, sneering scrutiny, but Fay smiled back at him with apparent frank innocence.

Ware broke into a discordant laugh.

"Ha, ha! what an innocent dove you are, fair Fay! How sweetly you coo, and how unfinishingly you have passed the ordeal! Who would ever suspect you of possessing venomous claws?"

She pouted her pretty lips like some spoilt child.

"Now, you are trying to be provoking. I'll not have you picking a quarrel with me, do you hear, Mr. Lucian?"

Ware stood up with folded arms and darkened face.

"Pray, drop the mask, Miss St. Orme. This by-play might be made amusing, but time is limited with me. You did your work well, I repeat."

"Then it's something new in my experience," Fay retorted, airily. "Explain yourself if it is of sufficient consequence. I'm sure I don't know what you're aiming at. First, place me a chair, please; no, not that horrid concern; it would crush all the flowers of my new crimped mourning dress."

Ware saw her seated, and withdrew a couple of paces.

"I confess to being outdone," he said. "I could not carry myself so bravely."

"Do be agreeable, Lucian. You've not uttered a single pretty sentiment since I came down. If you're wondering why I'm not in tears and pale with sorrow on account of the madame, candidly, between you and I, it's simply because she failed being insufficient enough to pay me for the trouble."

Lucian looked at her, almost in doubt.

"You got the vial?" he asked.

"The little one with the gold tube?—oh, yes." Fay shivered a little, and the mellow light of her wonderful eyes changed to glittering green points. "How fortunate that was no need of it!"

"Bah!" cried Lucian Ware, in mocking disbelief. "Deceive all the world as you see fit, but don't try to blind me. It was a sorry reward, wasn't it, for staining that fair little hand with so foul a crime as poisoning?"

### CHAPTER XVI.

#### THE COMPACT BROKEN.

"You are wrong," cried Fay, with angry impatience. "I never did it, I say—there was no need. If there had been—it madame had been sure of living a score of years without—I never could have done it. I knew that when I was put to the test."

"It tells to the winds," mocked Ware.

"It is the truth, Lucian, believe me. When the woman you sent came out of the shrubbery that night and beckoned to me as I stood alone by my sitting-room window, I crept out stealthily to meet her as she seemed to wish. I had no idea of what her object might be, and never thought that she had come from you until her own words had given you this to do."

"She drew the vial from her bosom, saying as she did so, in a hurried, whispering way:

"There, take that! One drop from the vial filtered through the tube will bring madame's Fate upon her. Don't be afraid—I come from Lucian, and it is his will

"She thrust the vial into my hand, and moved away silently as if she had been a ghost. I was taken by surprise, and had no time to question her, had I been disposed. I loitered out there in the shrubbery for a little while, facing the temptation which you had put before me. I was reckless and daring enough, but with the means to accomplish such a deed, I felt that I never could take away madame's life."

"If I had hated her, I might have continued to feel all that I said to you when I was excited and angered at the thought that our plans might be baffled as they have been since. But I had no cause to hate Madame Durand. I did hope that she might die, for I thought then I would be mistress of all Fairview, but I could not do her harm, even for that."

"It had grown quite dusk when I went in, and—I found the confusion which stunned and rejoiced me at once when they told me that she was dead. Dead without any aid of mine, I swear to you, Fay."

"Give it to you?—oh, no! I must have some weapon to combat those schemes of yours, and none more effective than the pretty toy you were free enough to intrust with me."

"And with that Miss St. Orme flashed out of his sight, to speed away to her private chamber, and double-locking the door, threw herself upon the bed and gave scope to the overpowering passion which possessed her, in her usual uncontrollable way.

Left alone, Lucian Ware leaned over the back of a heavy old chair, lost in gloomy meditation.

"Would she dare?" he asked himself.

"What will not a woman dare in a frenzy of love, and fierce, vindictive hate? I must find some means to get the vial away from her; but how?—that is the question. She will not give it up willingly to any one now."

No light came into his moody face as he reflected. He took up his hat at last and was passing out, when he saw Milly Ross in the court, a pair of large scissars in her hand, with which she was trimming the sere leaves from the various shrubs. He called to her as he stood in the open door, and she came at once, a little flush tingling the face which was even thinner and paler than its usual wont.

"You've been a long time gone, for you, Mr. Lucian," she said, quietly. "You're not looking well, either, sir. I think there's trouble come to all of us through the loss of the madame."

"A grievous disappointment to you, Milly."

"I don't deserve any thing better, and I'm not grieving over having nothing left to me. But I do regret having lost the confidence of my mistress just at the last, being unworthy of it, I mean."

"She spoke in a dreary way, which told how it had been weighing upon her mind."

"Well, that's all past now! I must ask you to do me a favor, Milly."

He paused a moment to concoct some plausible pretext for the part he wished her to perform. An idea occurred to him almost immediately.

"I have just permitted myself, through lack of forethought, to part with a very powerful sedative drug, which I must regain in some way, Milly. Miss St. Orme, whom I chance to meet in here, was complaining of nervousness and unrest; I gave her the vial, very thoughtlessly, for I fancy she is not the proper sort of person to be entrusted with any thing of that nature. I have remembered since that Doctor Gaines would not prescribe morphine in her hysterical attack, and this mixture contains a large proportion of opium. I have used it myself a few times, but not often on that account."

"Now, I wish you to watch your chance and secrete the vial without the young lady's knowledge. The marriage of convenience we contemplated is quite a breath of the past—there's no more of it. Affairs have changed all that, you see."

"Do you mean that it was only madame's wealth you wooed me for, or are you sacrificing heart-promptings to ambition now?"

"When Valere has once fulfilled the conditions of madame's will, you can easily secure the position which he now holds. I am sure that he and Mirabel will prove generous enough to give you a handsome salary which shall be adequate to our different way since I saw you last."

"When Valere has once fulfilled the conditions of madame's will, you can easily secure the position which he now holds. I am sure that he and Mirabel will prove generous enough to give you a handsome salary which shall be adequate to our different way since I saw you last."

Fay fairly shrank under the burning fire of his glance.

"You are slow to comprehend," he said, with scornful contempt. "The marriage of convenience we contemplated is quite a breath of the past—there's no more of it. Affairs have changed all that, you see."

"Do you mean that it was only madame's wealth you wooed me for, or are you sacrificing heart-promptings to ambition now?"

"

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boy, whom I had put out to nurse, for I was very poor, and my mistress had promised to pay me well." "And that boy?" interrupted Philip. "Where is he now?" "You have seen him," said Mrs. Pratt, flushing up, and then growing paler than before. "Gilbert Belmont is my son. But he did not know this until yesterday. Then I told him the truth. I had kept it from him because I knew he was proud and ambitious. I thought he would not like to acknowledge such a mother. But, thank God, it was all a mistake. He owns me and loves me at last."

She bowed her head for a moment, tears gushing plentifully from her eyes. Both Mabel and Philip comprehended now the nature of the strange power Belmont had seemed to possess over this woman. They pitied quite as much them who condemned her.

"But it was the story of the past that I came here to tell," she resumed, after a long pause. "I tell you that I was poor, and ambitious for my own. It was my poverty and ambition that led me on to guilt. A man who called himself Bill Cuppings came to me and tempted me with a heavy bribe. I was to take my charge, the little Mabel, out for a walk near the river one day, and there resign her to his keeping, and then pretend to my master that she had fallen into the river and been drowned. He solemnly swore to me that no harm should be offered the child, and that she would only be detained from her parents for a few years, and then restored.

"At last I consented. I gave him the child. That same day my mistress fell suddenly ill and died before night. I suspected foul play of some sort. But I was too frightened to speak out my mind. And after two or three days of torture I fled from the scene with my guilty secret still weighing upon my mind.

That is all I have to say except that I fully believe Mabel Trevor to be the same girl whom I resigned to the tender mercies of Bill Cuppings so many years ago. My secret has cost me much pain and torture. I am glad it is told at last."

Mr. Laundersdale had listened like one in a dream, his arms tightening in their pressure about Mabel's figure, as the recital proceeded.

"What do you mean?" he demanded, in a horror-stricken voice, at its conclusion, "by insinuating that my wife did not die a natural death?"

Mrs. Pratt shuddered and began to tremble.

"Perhaps I should not have said that!" she exclaimed. "I know nothing positive.

But I could not help linking, in my own mind, the two events of that day. It seemed as if some terrible but powerful enemy were working against you."

The wretched man's head dropped on his breast. "Ah, merciful Heaven!" he moaned. "What if this should be true?—what if it should be true?"

In the next breath he added:

"Ring the bell, Philip. The Bill Cuppings of whom this woman has spoken is now in the house. If he knows any thing of this matter, he shall be compelled to speak the truth."

Philip had just turned to comply with Jasper Laundersdale's request, when the room door opened and Marcia Devil, Jane Burt and Bill Cuppings himself entered the apartment.

Behind these three there came also a fourth individual.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE HOUR OF DEFEAT.

The last comer was none other than Miles Duff.

He had entered the house unperceived by everybody, and had quietly followed in the rear of the little party that had been attracted to the library by the suspicion that something unusual was transpiring there.

Thus strangely had the leading characters of our story been drawn together in that room.

"What is the meaning of this scene?" demanded Marcia Devil, pausing near the center of the apartment.

She had caught sight of Mabel, pressed close to the wildly-beating heart of Jasper Laundersdale.

The two brothers, Miles and Bill—brothers in infamy as well as by blood—had also seen the girl, and at the same moment.

They drew back at first, as if considerably disturbed. This was the first time they had seen Mabel since she had fled from Slaughter-house Point and the cruelty of Old Hell.

Vainly had they sought some clue to her place of refuge. And now they could scarcely credit the evidence of their senses, which said that there she was, at last, right before them, and in the arms of the very man from whom they were pledged to keep her separated.

Miles instantly recovered his usual composure, however. Nobody had answered Marcia's question, and he suddenly pushed past her, and confronted Mrs. Laundersdale.

The guilty woman saw him at last. Her eyes widely dilated, her face blanched to the ashen hue of a corpse, and the cold damp of fear stood out in beads upon her brow.

"Haunted!" came in a choking cry from her trembling lips.

Miles laughed—a low, harsh laugh, scarcely pleasant to listen to.

"Calm your fears, my dear Martha," he said, mockingly. "I didn't come from the other world, as you seem to imagine. In fact, you didn't succeed in sending me there when you made the attempt."

She only cowered further and further away from him, as if she would gladly have shrunk into the very wall itself.

Mrs. Pratt is with them, loved and revered by both; for they know the power of the temptation under which she erred, and are bound to be merciful.

Richard Morton, otherwise Dick Daredevil, married the baller-girl, Julia. Both have quitted the stage for good. In short, Dick has been set up in business in one of our Western cities through the kindness of Philip Jocelyn, and is now a good and prosperous citizen.

Bill Cuppings fled to Montana, and his fate is still one of the secrets of the future.

Jane Burt may have followed him. At any rate, her neck face was suddenly missed from Woodlawn, and nothing has ever been heard of her.

Bent Bender still pursues the "uneven" tenor of her way at Slaughter-house Point, and seems to be fonder than ever of Hand-some Hal.

Retributive justice has not yet overtaken

Then, wheeling round so that he faced the whole company, he added, more calmly:

"I have a confession to make, good friends. Yonder trembling woman, who calls herself Mrs. Laundersdale, has no right to the name! She is my wife!"

The guilty creature found voice at last.

"It is false!" she shrieked, wildly flinging up her hands.

"It is true," said Miles, quietly. "I married her more than twenty years ago, under the name of Richard Devil!"

There was an awed silence in the room after that. Bill Cuppings broke it.

"You?" he cried, in a tone of deep amazement. "Are you Richard Devil?"

"That is one of my aliases," Miles answered. "You didn't know it before? Well, that isn't strange. I've passed under a good many names in my day that I did not confide to you, my worthy brother. Besides, you and I were separated at the time when I woosed and won Martha, and she lived with me as my wife. She played minor parts in some of the lower grade of theaters until one little daughter was born. Shortly afterward we agreed to separate, and I had lost sight of my loving wife until a few weeks since, when you, Bill, brought me to Woodlawn."

A low cry came from Marcia's lips. She crept close to her mother's side.

"Is that man my father?" she demanded.

"Has he spoken the truth?"

The wretched woman looked slowly round the room. She read horror and condemnation in every eye, and knew that all was lost.

"Yes!" she cried, starting up, and flushing purple. "That fiend has spoken the truth. Denial on my part would be useless, I suppose. He is my husband. But I hoped and believed that he was dead, until I came to Woodlawn a few weeks since. I confess to everything. He was in my way, and I sought to poison him. Ah, you look horrified, Jasper. But that man has driven me desperate. While he lived, I was like a person walking on a bridge of glass. I knew it. I had learned to love ease, and luxury, and position, since having been made your wife. I did not mean to give them up."

She paused. Miles glared at her vindictively.

"Tell me what that fiend has spoken the truth?" he demanded, in a low, deep voice. "I am sure there is very much that ought to be told."

She shivered from head to foot as if a cold blast had blown upon her.

"Have you not humiliated me enough?" she moaned. "For the love of Heaven, spare me!"

"I will not. This is my revenge—and, it is sweet!"

"Listen," she said, covering her face with two trembling hands. "Jasper Laundersdale, what I have to say now concerns you more than anybody else. I had seen you long before your wife died, though you did not know that such a woman as myself had an existence at the time. You were rich and courted. I coveted your wealth and position. I determined to attain them. Bill Cuppings was my agent when he bartered with Mrs. Pratt for the disappearance of the little Mabel. That was the first stroke I made. Your wife died suddenly and mysteriously."

"Uncle!"

The one word came from Lorilyn in a hushed whisper; as if she scarce dared to break the pervading stillness.

But there was no answering voice; Karl Kurtz wept, unmindful of her presence.

The picture brought back to memory the days of childhood, the sunny hours made twice happy by the kindness of the departed one; the gentle care, the loving words, the fond caress, the sacrifices made to youth's enigma whims—all, all rose up, in one sweet recollection of the past, and fixed the influence in her heart.

Her full bosom heaved; the lustrous eyes were riveted on those death-cold features; like a lovely statue, whose subtle charms were screened, she stood, she gazed—yet, not a tear to kiss the beauty of her cheek, not one crystal drop from that mysterious fountain, whose gush betells soul-deep emotion.

"Uncle!"

Again her voice broke the solemn silence, floating through the room like one low, sad Moan note.

And, slowly, Karl Kurtz raised his weeping head.

"Lorilyn—it is you?"

"Uncle, try to meet this sorrow with the strength of resignation."

"I loved her better than my life!" he moaned. "Such as she was are ornaments to earth; while I, poor, weak, useless flesh, did not care to live—I have nothing here; she had everything. I would that I had been called, instead of her. O—oh, God! if this be my punishment for what I've done, then Heaven has secured its vengeance!"

"You are not entirely alone; you have one left yet." Lorilyn laid a hand on his shoulder.

Quickly he looked up. Their eyes met—her speaking the sympathy she felt for him in his misery; but his—there was an anxious expression in their glance.

"And you, too, may be torn from me," he said, in tremulous accents.

"Explain."

"Lorilyn! Lorilyn! you know not half

the strength of my wretchedness." And, after a pause, he added:

"Perhaps it will not be long before I stand all alone, all alone; and then God help me! There is but one refuge—the grave."

"Hush! You are talking wildly. You would not destroy yourself?"

He gazed strangely into the face of his niece for a moment; then said, as he reached and took her hand in his:

"Better that than to continue here in such existence."

"Uncle, would you bar yourself, forever, from the one who awaits you in a happier home than this?"

She spoke impressively; his eyes fell, as this warning, as it were, came in deep, measured tones from her lips.

"I am wrong—I am wrong. Yet, what right have you to forbid suicide, when you can not prove that it would be better for a hopeless man to live? Death is oftentimes welcome, when it defies our cares and troubles."

"Banish such thoughts. You say I, too, may be torn from you?"

He hesitated.

"Lorilyn, I am your uncle; but, in many ways, I have deceived you—"

"Deceived me?" in surprise.

"Ay, deceived you. Listen to me; I feel that I must explain to you, to ease my mind of its guilty contents—"

"Uncle!"

"Listen to me, I say: but, you will have pity—for I am crushed, now, even to the verge of the grave!"

He was quivering in a sudden, nervous excitement; the fingers that closed round Lorilyn's hand were cold as ice.

"Calm yourself, uncle. Tell me in what way you have deceived me? I forgive you for it—be it what it may."

"You do? You promise that?" eagerly.

"Yes."

"O—h! Shall I?—shall I?" to himself:

and then, with the framing of determination: "Lorilyn, my true name is Robert St. Clair!"

"Robert St. Clair!" repeated in astonishment.

"Yes—yes—listen to me—"

He poured forth to her ears the secrets of his life! In the solitude of that room he nerved himself to tell her every thing, ay, every thing.

What the reader knows of Robert St. Clair, she learned then—and listened, as though she dreamed, to the wild, burning confession.

He did not take long to tell her; few were the words made to convey the whole sad story of his wrong-doings and repentence.

Then when it was over, when he sunk

back, exhausted, in his chair, and closed his aching eyes, she left him—left him in uncertainty as to what would be her course—and turned in the direction of her own apartment.

"Ay, God help him," she thought. "Vincent Carew has, indeed, a powerful hold upon him. The threats uttered in the parlor were not idle ones. But it is strange: if uncle was so careful in revising the document which would have betrayed him long ago, why has he not seen, that this wicked man, Vincent Carew, is my half-brother?

Were I to proclaim our relationship, and prove the utter impossibility of our marriage, to what extremes would his angry disappointment lead him? Uncle must be saved! How—how can it be done?"

As she reached the landing, she paused.

She heard the thunder of horsehoofs upon the drive, and voices in the hall below.

Presently some one spoke sharply to the stable, who came up to take charge of the horses; then they entered the house—now they were ascending the stairs.

A single glance discovered who it was.

She drew back into the welcome shadow of a niche, and in another instant Vincent Carew and his specter-like follower passed her concealment.

She saw by the dim light of the entry lamp, that Carew's face wore a dark, fierce expression; that his eyes were bloodshot and glaring; that he was absorbed in thought.

She watched them till they disappeared around a turn in the hall, and, descending to the second floor, continued on to her own apartment.

Her dressing-maid was there, dozing and nodding in a chair.

She would not have aroused her; but seated herself beside the unique center-table, raised one elbow to its checkered leaf, and bowed her head until it rested on the jewels of her hand.

"Miss Lorilyn is it you?" exclaimed the girl, sleepy, starting up and rubbing her eyes.

"Yes; it is I," was the absent answer.

"Will you disrobe, Miss? Shall I—"

"No, Lena—no; leave me to myself. You may retire."

"Retire? Why, Miss, it's early yet. You may want me."

"No, I shall not want you. Go—I wish to be alone."

And when alone, she pondered on the hour of gloom.

She seemed to hear again the loud threats of Vincent Carew; and she thought of the confession she had listened to from her uncle.

The load was heavy that weighed upon her mind; the mazes hovered thick across imagination's path.

Minutes multiplied as she sat in lone silence there; she caught not the sound of the clock-stroke as it pealed forth its gauge of time, and told the night's advance.

Ten o'clock! Another stillness had settled in the mansion. It was the hour of sleep.

Then, through the grave-like silence, broke a faint, yet startling noise.

Quick as the deer that scents a danger

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over to the ready stabler, with a sharp, brisk command. Then he entered the house.

Rouel, his shadow, followed silently.

When they had passed the parlor, the ball-like head of Thaddeus Gimp appeared around the door-jamb, and the pale, blue eyes gazed after the retreating pair.

"Mr. Gimp, what is the meaning of this movement? Why not have seized them at once?"

It was Oscar Storms who spoke, and his words were uttered in a tone of excitement.

Gimp wheeled, grasped him by the arm, and placing a finger to his lips, said:

"To work!" came again from between tightly-locked teeth; and Dyke groaned as he drew still further away from his terrible master.

Carew laid off his coat and vest, and, brushing up the matted locks that fell upon his chalky forehead, advanced to a closet. Here he took from a shelf a large stone chisel and a mallet.

"Secure the door," he said.

Rouel did as he was ordered, watching the other's movements in wonderment.

Striking the mallet several times against the wall, within the closet, he muttered:

"It must be as I divine. From the outside I have noticed five windows. There are two in my room; two in the room beyond. Then what means the fifth? Lorilyn's room is directly beneath here, and it has three windows—curse this wall! it is hard as rock. But there must be space on the other side—Ah!" The mallet had sunk deep in the plaster; he had accomplished what he sought.

"But, what are you going to do?" asked the lawyer started out in the hall.

"Wait for me. Don't go to bed—wait for me in the parlor. Be back soon."

Oscar was left in wonderment. Gimp hastened outside to the man who was leading away the horses.

"Hold on there!" he cried, "I want one of those—right off."

"One of these, sir?"

"Yes—quick! No time for fooling: get out of the quick!"

"But they're used up, sir. Hadn't you better take a fresh one?"

"Makes no difference. Let go the bridle—rascal! Don't stop me!"

With remarkable elasticity he swung his corpulent body into the saddle, and then spoke to the tired beast.

The faithful brute, though worn to exhaustion by its recent labors, obeyed his voice, and away he went at a gallop.

The stirrups were too long for Gimp; but it mattered not—there was no time for arranging the buckles; and onward he dashed, grasping the pommet with one hand and the reins with the other, poising himself as best he could—entirely forgetful of the fact that he was bareheaded.

Before a room on the third floor, Vincent Carew paused.

"Go on, Dyke Rouel, and await me," he said.

Dyke obeyed, and Carew turned into the apartment.

On the privacy of a husband's grief, the villain intruded; he stood in the presence of Karl Kurz, in the presence of death—and the dead one his victim.

The miserable man who wept at the bedside, looked up as Carew entered; and, even in his wretchedness, stern mold cast his features at seeing who the unceremonious comer was.

"Vincent Carew—vile man that you are! what brings you here?"

"Careful, Robert St. Clair!"

"Ha!"—with a start of fear. "What—why do you intrude upon me?"

"I am not dead yet, Robert St. Clair!" he hissed, while his red eyes flamed in rising anger.

"Not dead?"

"Nor am I to die by your hand!" and his voice was thick and men ominous.

"By my hand! What do you mean by that?"

"Ha! ha! ha!"—a low, chuckling laugh to mock the echoes of a toomby cavern.

"Why do you look like Robert St. Clair?"

"Because I've found you out. Ha! ha! ha! No more; that will do. I only wanted to see if you are here. To-morrow—to-morrow! Ha! ha! ha!"

He withdrew abruptly, while the low, demon laugh was yet on his lips.

He was acting strangely, this being of atrocious deeds; he was not himself—some wild, crazy influence was upon him.

Slowly he walked toward his own apartment.

He found Dyke standing near the bed, pale and shivering. His eyebrows were twitching with spasmodic rapidity; his knees bent, and he looked at his master in a terrified way.

"Well, fool! what's the matter now?" demanded Carew.

"M—m—maester—"

"Out with it!"

"I'm almost afraid, good maester—I'm afraid you'll kill me!" stammered Dyke, in a woeful accent.

"Ha! you've discovered something?"

"Y—y—yes, maester—oh, Lord! Don't be angry! It wasn't my fault. You told me to leave it here, underneath the bed; you know you did," and he trembled and shook the more.

"The box!—the box! You mean the box? Dog—I—tell me, quick—what has happened to it?"

Carew clutched him by the collar, and was shaking him roughly.

"Speak, I say! Has any thing happened to the box?"

"Ye—ye—oh, maester!—don't! I could n't help it!"

He was dragged to his knees, and Carew glared down upon him, while he gripped the terrified fellow in a painful hold.

"The box!" he cried, in a voice husky and savage.

"It's not the box, maester, but the thing that's in it—"

"H—h! the scorpion!"

"Yes, maester—"

"Speak I—speak, or I shall kill you!"

"Don't, maester! I couldn't help it. You told me to leave it here!"

"What has befallen it?" nearly jerking Dyke forward on his face.

"It's—it's dead!"

"Dead!" Vincent Carew reeled back and struck his hands to his brow.

Then, with the purple of rage in his face, and the glower of a demon in his eyes, he cried:

"You lie, Dyke Rouel!—you lie!"

"No, good maester, I don't lie at all," faltered Dyke, as he shrank before the dire gaze that fastened on him.

Carew bounded to a stooping posture by the bed. In a second he had torn open the cover of the box. He saw that his follower spoke the truth.

For awhile he contemplated the terrible thing—so trifling and pretty, and yet so deadly—and when he arose, his face was no longer red, but of a sickly white, and his eyes stared in a way half vacant.

"It has died," he uttered, thoughtfully.

"Yes, maester, that's it. The box was too close, and it smothered."

"Now, then, to work!" arousing from his momentary reverie.

"To work, maester?" ventured Dyke, in

tremulous inquiry. "Why, what are you going to do?"

"To work!" came again from between tightly-locked teeth; and Dyke groaned as he drew still further away from his terrible master.

Carew laid off his coat and vest, and, brushing up the matted locks that fell upon his chalky forehead, advanced to a closet. Here he took from a shelf a large stone chisel and a mallet.

"Secure the door," he said.

Rouel did as he was ordered, watching the other's movements in wonderment.

Striking the mallet several times against the wall, within the closet, he muttered:

"It must be as I divine. From the outside I have noticed five windows. There are two in my room; two in the room beyond. Then what means the fifth? Lorilyn's room is directly beneath here, and it has three windows—curse this wall! it is hard as rock. But there must be space on the other side—Ah!" The mallet had sunk deep in the plaster; he had accomplished what he sought.

"But, what are you going to do?" asked the lawyer started out in the hall.

"Wait for me. Don't go to bed—wait for me in the parlor. Be back soon."

Oscar was left in wonderment. Gimp hastened outside to the man who was leading away the horses.

"Hold on there!" he cried, "I want one of those—right off."

"One of these, sir?"

"Yes—quick! No time for fooling: get out of the quick!"

"But they're used up, sir. Hadn't you better take a fresh one?"

"Makes no difference. Let go the bridle—rascal! Don't stop me!"

With remarkable elasticity he swung his corpulent body into the saddle, and then spoke to the tired beast.

The faithful brute, though worn to exhaustion by its recent labors, obeyed his voice, and away he went at a gallop.

The stirrups were too long for Gimp; but it mattered not—there was no time for arranging the buckles; and onward he dashed, grasping the pommet with one hand and the reins with the other, poising himself as best he could—entirely forgetful of the fact that he was bareheaded.

Before a room on the third floor, Vincent Carew paused.

"Go on, Dyke Rouel, and await me," he said.

Dyke obeyed, and Carew turned into the apartment.

On the privacy of a husband's grief, the villain intruded; he stood in the presence of Karl Kurz, in the presence of death—and the dead one his victim.

The miserable man who wept at the bedside, looked up as Carew entered; and, even in his wretchedness, stern mold cast his features at seeing who the unceremonious comer was.

"Vincent Carew—vile man that you are! what brings you here?"

"Careful, Robert St. Clair!"

"Ha!"—with a start of fear. "What—why do you intrude upon me?"

"I am not dead yet, Robert St. Clair!" he hissed, while his red eyes flamed in rising anger.

"Not dead?"

"Nor am I to die by your hand!" and his voice was thick and men ominous.

"By my hand! What do you mean by that?"

"Ha! ha! ha!"—a low, chuckling laugh to mock the echoes of a toomby cavern.

"Why do you look like Robert St. Clair?"

"Because I've found you out. Ha! ha! ha! No more; that will do. I only wanted to see if you are here. To-morrow—to-morrow! Ha! ha! ha!"

He withdrew abruptly, while the low, demon laugh was yet on his lips.

He was acting strangely, this being of atrocious deeds; he was not himself—some wild, crazy influence was upon him.

Slowly he walked toward his own apartment.

He found Dyke standing near the bed, pale and shivering. His eyebrows were twitching with spasmodic rapidity; his knees bent, and he looked at his master in a terrified way.

"Well, fool! what's the matter now?" demanded Carew.

"M—m—maester—"

"Out with it!"

"I'm almost afraid, good maester—I'm afraid you'll kill me!" stammered Dyke, in a woeful accent.

"Ha! you've discovered something?"

"Y—y—yes, maester—oh, Lord! Don't be angry! It wasn't my fault. You told me to leave it here, underneath the bed; you know you did," and he trembled and shook the more.

"The box!—the box! You mean the box? Dog—I—tell me, quick—what has happened to it?"

Carew clutched him by the collar, and was shaking him roughly.

"Speak, I say! Has any thing happened to the box?"

"Ye—ye—oh, maester!—don't! I could n't help it!"

He was dragged to his knees, and Carew glared down upon him, while he gripped the terrified fellow in a painful hold.

"The box!" he cried, in a voice husky and savage.

"It's not the box, maester, but the thing that's in it—"

"H—h! the scorpion!"

"Yes, maester—"

"Speak I—speak, or I shall kill you!"

"Don't, maester! I couldn't help it. You told me to leave it here!"

"What has befallen it?" nearly jerking Dyke forward on his face.

"It's—it's dead!"

"Dead!" Vincent Carew reeled back and struck his hands to his brow.

Then, with the purple of rage in his face, and the glower of a demon in his eyes, he cried:

"You lie, Dyke Rouel!—you lie!"

"No, good maester, I don't lie at all," faltered Dyke, as he shrank before the dire gaze that fastened on him.

Carew bounded to a stooping posture by the bed. In a second he had torn open the cover of the box. He saw that his follower spoke the truth.

For awhile he contemplated the terrible thing—so trifling and pretty, and yet so deadly—and when he arose, his face was no longer red, but of a sickly white, and his eyes stared in a way half vacant.

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"Yes, maester—"

**TO A BOY.** It discussed quoth with glib tongue, "I'm wading out and about,  
BY JOE JOE, JR. And out again I go,  
Stop, urchin, chasing butterflies  
Along the wayside bank. I did know  
You have not learned yet life is brief,  
Nor yet that time is money.  
You're having lots of pleasure now,  
There's many a good time waiting,  
You don't care how potatoes sell,  
Nor how meat pork is rating:  
But, my young friend, there'll be a time  
When you will be a man, sir,  
Whether a noble one or mean  
Is more than I can answer.  
Who knows you yet may utter forth  
Ecclesiastic tenets,  
Or you may walk a lower path,  
And deal in worldly peanuts.  
It may be that you yet may lead  
The armies of the nation,  
Or you may lead a life quite low,  
And die in elevation.  
You might become a president  
Altogether from pell-mell,  
But it is quite like that  
You'll keep a corner dogger.  
You might be an astronomer,  
The course of planets watching,  
Or, haply fate may lead you to  
Dog-fighting and rat-catching.  
You might be an M. C. and take  
A seat in Uncle Sam's house;  
Your aspirations may not reach  
No higher than the almshouse.  
You may be Governor of the State,  
An honor to your station,  
Or that your life to dissipate  
You'll plunge in dissipation.  
Perchance you might be an M. D.,  
The noblist of the Century;  
It may be you'll retire from life  
And die in pentimento.  
Did you call me a fool? You scamp!  
I know what's your position, I  
In like he is, without a doubt—  
A dirty politician.

### The Court of Lions.

BY LAUNCE POYNTE.

L.—THE BEGGER-ASTROLOGER.

The midday sun shone hot and scorching on the courts of the Alhambra, and east deep, black shadows under the long vistas of Saracenic arches, springing from light, graceful pillars, whose capitals blazed with gilding and mosaic of all the colors in the rainbow.

The interior of the Alhambra was dark and gloomy, as befits a fortress, which it was, in the days of the Abencerrages. Lofty towers, with frowning battlements, overhanging *échiquettes*, or watch-towers, flanking the curtains and dark rows of loopholes everywhere, announced the ever watchful presence of the Moorish soldier.

But within, the Alhambra was a palace; if without, it frowned a fortress. Its courts were alive with springing fountains and waving palms. The very pavement was tessellated with colors of surpassing richness, and the colonnades, balconies, and latticed windows were all that the Eastern fancy of the Morisco could design of poetry and grace.

The sole shortcoming of the Arabs in respect to art was the total absence of imitation of animated nature. The Koran forbids it for fear of encouraging idolatry, and in consequence, in the single instance in which the law was broken, "The Court of Lions," the result, in the case of the stone lions that support the fountain, was decidedly archaic, if not grotesque. But the rest of the Court of Lions, aside from the fountain, is a marvel of beauty, in color and form, and even in its present ruinous state, has been the theme of admiration to artist and poet of every nationality.

In this court, nearly four hundred years ago, a young Moorish cavalier was walking impatiently up and down, in the shadow of the southern arcade, pausing ever and anon to listen to the tinkle and splash of the fountain, as if expecting to distinguish an approaching footfall louder than the rest.

The cavalier was young, and slender in frame, somewhat simply dressed, but with an air of scorn and haughty assertion in every attitude, that told him to be of exalted station in the court of the then reigning king of Granada, the sultan Bon Abdallah, better known as Boabdil. Every now and then he let his hand fall with angry vehemence on the hilt of his sabre, and muttered an impatient curse on the laggard, whoever he was.

At last the sound of a slow, shuffling footstep was audible in the long-arched corridor that led into the court, and a slouching, ragged figure, leaning on a staff, hobbled into the Court of Lions. The figure was that of an old man, bent with extreme age, with a greasy skull-cap on his gray hair, and a dark gabardine, over which his grizzled beard fell in front, nearly to his waist. The dark eyes, hooked nose, and large, sensual mouth, were all essentially Jewish, as well as the nobility of brow that dominated over the sensuality below, and makes the Jewish type so prominent in the affairs of nations, whenever not kept down by discriminating laws.

The old man hobbled to the center of the court, and sat down on a bench under a spreading tree, not seeing the cavalier, who on his part, had drawn back into the shadow at the first footstep, and now seemed as unwilling to advance as he had before been impatient.

He watched the old man for some time before he made a motion.

Helpless and inoffensive as the appearance of the other was, he was known, and superstitiously feared, far and wide, among the Moors, as the "Beggar Astrologer," Abraham ben Shimeï. He was reported to be enormously rich, for all his beggary appearance; and his knowledge of the stars was commonly asserted to be the fruit of communion with the Prince of Darkness.

After several minutes, however, the young cavalier seemed to pluck up courage, and putting on the regular court swagger, he stalked down the steps into the open space, and walked past the old Jew with a scornful air, one hand on his sword-hilt, the other on his hip. As he passed, he looked over his shoulder, with the haughty interrogatory:

"Well, servant of Ebliis! what news from Gehenna?"

The old Jew shrugged his shoulders, and looked up with a gesture of depreciation. Something in his keen, dark eye, and the dubious smile on his broad, sensual mouth seemed to arrest the gay cavalier, for he halted in suspense while the other slowly spoke.

"Prince Hamet wished for news of the stars last night. To-day he wishes for news

from Gehenna. I have both. Which will please you, mighty prince?"

Prince Hamet started and turned pale, in spite of his swagger.

"I want what I asked for—last—last night," he stammered.

"I read the stars in my lord's behalf," said the astrologer, slowly; "and I saw the Prince of Darkness on the summit of Mount Elboor, in Circassia, at the same time. I have news from both, concerning my lord, good and bad. But my lord the prince will not compel a poor old man to incur danger on his behalf for nothing, surely" and the soothsayer held out a skinny hand, trembling with palsy and avarice, to the Moorish cavalier.

"Oh!" cried Genevieve, stretching out her arms, laden as they were, "if I could only change this glorious flood of light into soul-inspiring wine, and quaff the golden nectar!" The lovely summer-time; the bright-winged days, I can never be satisfied with drinking in their blissful sweets. What pity that life can't be made up of them!"

"What are you, a butterfly or a hummingbird, that you despise such matter-of-fact elements woven in as refreshment like this?"

Rose held aloft the little round willow basket she carried, crowned by a thick wreath of vine-leaves through which luscious blackberries glistened temptingly.

"Sweets fit for the gods! One of Mother Nature's happiest provisions for her loving, thirsting children. How could I resist such tempting fruit when plucked by fingers so fair? What am I, do you ask? Do you know what people call me, Rose, petite?"

"People are ill-natured sometimes. I don't allow them to prejudice me."

"Then just before I came here they were pitying that dear Miss Sinclair who was so taken with the little adventure. Ah, Rose, Rose! is it then so wrong to luxuriate in the rest you have offered me? To throw care to the winds and live in perpetual sunshine?"

"Oh, if there be a joy upon earth, it is this."

"Enjoy it then without a fear," said Rose, smiling into the fair, winsome face. "But come, Genevieve, you will have opportunity of enjoying the golden glamour to the utmost in the long walk before us. For my part I wish the sunshine was a little less intense. The glare from the river will be intolerable."

"Oh, most prosaic of ordinary mortals! Come by the wood-path, then. It is further, but what of that."

Something in the basilisk gaze of the old man seemed to awe the young one, for he became very pale, the sweat stood on his brow, and he trembled from head to foot as he listened. Prince Hamet was a brave warrior, and used to bear the brunt of a hard-fought day with the bravest, but the power of superstition completely quelled



THE COURT OF LIONS.

"Rob you of the coveted brightness?" "It will keep for me. It's not a sacrifice, you may be certain. I don't think I could bear to renounce any actual wish of my heart—I never have, at least."

"And little fear of ever being put to the trial," interrupted another voice. A pleasant, masculine voice, and the girl turned with a start to find its owner close beside them.

The little green scallop was dancing at the edge of the tide, as if impatient to break from its moorings and drift with the sparkling ripples. Its late occupant was the stalwart young man, whose white, aristocratic hands and easy poise, pronounced him at once of the wealthy city breed.

Genevieve uttered a little cry, half surprise, half unconcealed pleasure. Rose changed her basket to her left hand, and extended her right with a frankness good to see in this day of hypocrisy and affectation.

"Lionel! what an unexpected pleasure! How did you find us here?"

"By accident, simply. I was taking a sail while I waited for Reeves; we were coming to the cottage presently."

"Sailing under this sun," cried Rose. "It was hot, I confess," laughed he. "I wilted. Think of it; two miles to row back again, but I am pre-paid for all my exertion."

Genevieve's lashes flashed up and claimed the glance which was comprehending Rose. "Don't go," she said, coaxingly. "Come with us; Reeves will not remain long behind; you two are such inseparables. Persevere him, Rose."

He needed little persuasion it appeared; and the trio trod the golden lances which quivered athwart the broad shaded path they had chosen.

It was no stately summer residence, this cozy retreat of the Sinclairs. There were villas and wide-spreading mansions in sight, but this was a tiny gray cottage surrounded by latticed porches, overrun by climbing sweetbrier, and almost hidden by the dense foliage of clustering forest trees.

Genevieve dropped her fragrant burden on a bench in one of the dim, cool porches, and sent her hat spinning through an open window. Lionel stooped to rescue some scattered blossoms, while Rose passed from their sight into the cottage.

"Heart's-ease," said he, "but what can ease a heart that is wilfully yielding to pain? Holding to truth, are we false because light has come to us? Which is better—to shut out the light, or prove recant to fixed principles and cherished hopes?"

He seemed rather communing with himself than addressing her. Genevieve dipped her hands like twin snowballs in and out of the mass of blossoms, reducing them to symmetrical form while she cast sidelong the wide sleeves had fallen away like fleecy clouds.

"All change is not falsity," said she,

softly. "It is better, I think, to break any bonds which may retain us, than to cloud our lives by great mistakes."

The shifting lights in his brown eyes flamed more constantly under her shy, returning glances. Looking straight into his face, you would scarcely feel that he was a man to be implicitly relied upon. Honest enough at heart, but lacking that firmness which is as a rock of faith in a true man.

"What can I do, Genevieve?" he appealed to her almost helplessly. "If I cast off the old ties what can I depend upon?"

"Oh, silly man! Are you not content to escape from the snare?"

"I never wished to escape until I saw you."

She had finished her bouquet, and with the remaining blossoms wove a long slender chain. Turning, she met his imploring eyes, and hesitating for a second, flung the floral strand about his neck.

"Break it if you dare," she cried, in mocking gayety.

"I know how proudly I would wear your chains—if I were only free."

Just there Rose appeared at the door, calling them to lunch. She saw the appealing look in Lionel's eyes that rested so hungrily upon the dazzling vision of womanhood by his side, and it seemed to her that the brightness had suddenly gone out from the opening world. But still the sky hung serene and cloudless over all.

The undefined shadow lifted itself as the step of a new-comer rang over the gravelled walk, and Reeves sprang lightly up the steps.

Not so handsome as the other one, but with the light of a steadfast soul beaming in every line of his honest face.

He dropped a passing word to the two in the porch, and then went straight to Rose, who still lingered, waiting for them.

Lionel broke faith with me," said he, "but I knew where the flower of attraction would draw him."

"I am responsible," asserted Genevieve. "I don't believe Rose sanctioned the broken vow of friendship."

And under cover of this surface chat, Lionel removed the flower-chain from his neck and dropped it in the pocket of his loose

Just then the boat swung out into the river and steamed away.

"Too late!" he said, with an audible groan. "They have gone together, Genevieve and Lionel. He did not go back with me after we left here, but I did not suspect his intention then. And Rose, I have discovered to-night that that woman has a husband alive. She was called an adventuress, you know; and she has been silencing her creditors with promises to satisfy their demands when she should marry Lionel. One who knew her came down this afternoon for the purpose of undeceiving him, and at the last moment I learned that he had taken tickets for the boat to-night."

In his anxiety for his friend! He had forgotten the shock it would be to her, as he had overridden all selfish considerations of himself.

It was not in her nature to be demonstrative, and except for her sudden pallor, gave little outward sign of the anguish the revelation caused her.

"He must be saved from her," she said, after a moment in which the earth and sky whirled and wavered before her sight, then slowly recovered their proper places again.

"You must do it—if you can cut reach the night-train you can cut off their flight."

He had not thought of that, but realizing now that he had not a moment to spare he dashed away in the same great haste he had come.

It is enough to know that he succeeded, and the fair-faced adventuress lost her victim.

Lionel came back very penitent and remorseful, but after the shock of that night Rose could never again trust him. Reeves gained the right forfeited by his friend, and in him she has found a rock of true faith to lean upon.

### Beat Time's Notes.

ANSWERS TO MY CORRESPONDENTS.

BOOTBLACK. You might purchase a ten-cylinder Hoe press second-hand, for say, a hundred thousand dollars. You might arrange to pay only ninety thousand down and the balance in three months.

HISTORIC. America was discovered in 1492. Some people assert it was the best thing ever happened for the United States, and others again say it was the worst.

HOUSEWIFE. The best thing for bed-bugs that I can find, after a good deal of inquiry, is four in a bed; the worst thing for them would be to get them between a couple of brickbats and crack them.

PHILIP. Locusts grow on locust trees. John ate them, seasoned with untempered honey. I can't say just when they get ripe. They are not of the same genera as *locusta*. That genera is indigenous; whereas the locust is an imported beast.

NATURALIST. Tadpoles are no relation to pole-poles or to the North Pole. I might say they are a branch of *fish-poles*.

FARMER. Do not turn your boys off because they won't work: always board them; that is, use a board on them: it is the healthiest thing I know of.

ANTIQUE. Some men give a great deal for old coins, but for my part I prefer the newer ones. They do a good deal more good.

VOCAL. I can't tell what kind of a singer you would make. If you would send me a piece of your voice I could give you a more definite answer.

THEODORE. The best way to get rid of superfluous hair is to go out among the Indians.

SAM. The best motive power is the power of a good motive.

ASTRONOMER. The sun rises by warming up and sets by cooling down.

DIANA. The poem you sent is on the reverse side of poetry. I have boiled it down and rendered it out and don't find any thing original in it but the spelling. You didn't give good measure, and though you began and ended every line with a capital, it is not a capital poem, by three pecks. I have found you guilty of poetry-slaughter in the third degree. I can hold late poetry fifty feet off and guess what it is; I know the run of it.

SOLomon. I know a man who chewed tobacco forty years and never had a lawsuit. I know another who smoked a pipe fifty-eight years and never fell and broke his neck. These cases should make you have a better opinion of the weed. Liquors may be very injurious, but my old uncle took his "straight" for eighty-seven years, and he used to say with a good deal of pride that he never had a corn, and when he died he hadn't a cent for his children to quarrel about. The whisky "straightened" that.

SIM. My idea of what a dandy is composed of is ninety parts of pride, of ten parts of speech and one part-your-hair-in-the-middle.

SOLDIER. When our men were in Libby prison their rations were very poor, and yet they always sighed for their *Libby-rations*.

BOR. Do something or you will always find something due.

BILL. Some authors' books might be appropriately bound in calf and others in sheep.

EMPEROR OF JAPAN. I should be very glad if every defaulting official in this country would have the free privilege of committing har-i-kari.

B. In the old times in the State of Massachusetts the penalty for swearing was two dollars for the first oath and fifty cents for each additional oath, so you can see that it was a luxury which only the rich could indulge in. A poor man could only afford to swear one or two oaths a week, but then he made them worth the money. It was a serious drawback to the whale and cod fisheries, for when a sailor can't swear he can't fish.

PHILOSOPHER. Utopia is a visionary place, where book-agents and lightning-rod men don't splice life with a pleasing variety; a place where Sunday lasts all the week, and where wives don't care a cent for the new fashions, and where people never ask you for